



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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CITY OF CHICAGO PARTNERS WITH LYFT AND UBER TO ADDRESS AN INCREASE IN VICTIMS NEEDING TO FLEE VIOLENCE

Partnership will provide free rides for residents calling the IL Domestic Violence Hotline in need of safe transportation

CHICAGO—Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced a partnership with Chicago's ride-hailing providers, Lyft and Uber, to support any resident that is seeking refuge from domestic violence during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Lyft and Uber have collectively donated over \$20,000 to provide free rides for those seeking domestic violence services. These funds will be directed to the IL Domestic Violence Hotline, which connects services for those who have experienced domestic violence. Access to these services is critical now more than ever before as the Hotline has seen a slight uptick in calls over the past several weeks since COVID-19 has spiked, and as the Stay at Home order was put into place.

"We understand that the 'Stay at Home' order may place an additional burden for residents who are already experiencing violence at home or in the workplace, which is why the City of Chicago is working with all of our partners to make sure those who need shelter or refuge from violence can get it when they need it," said Mayor Lightfoot. "We are committed to preserving the health and wellness of all our residents, but that doesn't just mean preventing the spread of COVID-19. We thank our partners at Lyft and Uber for stepping up during these difficult times, and for aiding in our broader mission to connect residents of any age or gender with shelter and other potentially life-saving services."

Residents seeking transportation and other services to flee a violent situation, which includes domestic violence and human trafficking, can contact the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline which is available 24/7 directly at 1-877-TO END DV (1-877-863-6338 voice or 1-877-863-6339 TTY). Operators will then deploy a driver from either Lyft or Uber to the location to pick up the rider and transport them to a new location of their choosing. The system will work to pair the requester with the closest driver in the area, and the requester's privacy will be protected by personnel at the Hotline.

"This is an unprecedented time for all Chicagoans, and Lyft is proud to activate our LyftUp initiative to step up to help so many across our city and state," said Elliot Darvick, Regional Director, Midwest, Lyft. "We thank the City of Chicago for partnering on this critical initiative to increase access to transportation in our community."



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In addition to providing ride codes for victims fleeing violence, Lyft has also donated \$10,000 in ride codes to help in bringing food and supplies to the many people who are unable to leave their home at this time. All residents, both current Lyft riders or first-time users, can use codes **CHICAGOACCESS20** and **CHICAGORELIEF20** for a one-time \$25 credit available for use on a first-come, first-utilized basis.

“We are pleased to be partnering with the City to provide an essential service to residents during this unprecedented time of need,” said Danielle Sheridan, Head of US City Operations for Uber. “This service will help residents that might otherwise not be able to access safe transportation amid the COVID-19 public health crisis. As one of the nation’s largest transportation providers, we are pleased to be leading the charge and using our services for good.”

The latest citywide data from the Hotline shows a marked increase of domestic violence calls since the COVID-19 crisis took hold. For the month of March alone, the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline experienced a 6 percent increase in calls in Chicago compared to March 2019. The hotline has also received 30 additional texts for domestic violence claims in Chicago compared to March 2019, and on March 30, 2020 the hotline received 104 calls, the highest daily volume in over a year.

The Department of Family and Support Services is the lead agency for the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline and works exclusively with The Network: Advocating Against Domestic Violence, a local nonprofit, to ensure residents have access to domestic violence support resources 24/7/365 – especially during this time of crisis. The Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline is available 24/7 via call or text in over 240 languages.

“Access to critical resources, like transportation, is essential to the wellbeing of survivors across the City,” said DFSS Commissioner Lisa Morrison Butler. “Now, more than ever, Chicago’s most vulnerable residents are relying on us to provide services and resources to help them stay safe during this crisis. I applaud Lyft and Uber for coming forward to address needs of survivors as we all work together to ensure the security of all Chicagoans.”

In addition to direct victim response, the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline supports a network of service providers that address counseling and legal needs for Illinois residents affected by domestic violence. The City operates shelter beds for domestic violence survivors through DFSS, which are following the guidance of the Chicago Department of Public Health to ensure the proper social distancing and sanitary measures are observed. The Department also funds approximately 30 programs that provide direct services to Chicago survivors of domestic violence.

Recently, the State of Illinois announced a \$1.2 million plan to increase the capacity of the current statewide network of services for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors during the COVID-19 pandemic. The State’s plan expands the role of the DV Helpline by creating a one-stop access point for shelter needs, including providing additional assistance for Chicagoans that are fleeing a violent situation in to provide them access to safe shelter.



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“During times of crisis, there may be an increase in domestic and sexual violence, while barriers to services are compounded,” said IDHS Secretary Grace B. Hou. “The health and safety of survivors across the entire state during COVID-19 is of the utmost importance to IDHS and Gov. Pritzker, and it’s imperative that critical services like the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline, continue.”

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the City launched the Stay Home, Save Lives campaign to inform residents about how they can stay healthy and do their part to bend the curve of the virus. For more information and updates on COVID-19, text COVID19 to 78015, email coronavirus@chicago.gov or visit Chicago.gov/coronavirus.

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